

Exodus 19 - Thursday, January 8th, 2009

- In chapter 18, Moses is reunited with his wife and two sons along with his father-in-law Jethro after being apart for about one year.
- In chapter 19, we find a most interesting chapter because God is now preparing Israel to receive His law while they are at Mt. Sinai.

- It's important to note that over 57 chapters of Scripture, (up to Numbers chapter 10), were written about Israel at Mt. Sinai.
- It's also interesting to note all that has taken place leading up to chapter 19. Much has happened in just a short period of three months.
- God has delivered them from Egypt, parted the Red Sea, provided food and water miraculously, and won victory over the Amalekites.

1 In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

- The Israelites will camp here at Mount Sinai for about one year. Actually, this is the place where Moses met God in the burning bush.
- It's interesting that Moses would lead the Israelites to a place to meet God, only after he himself had met God at this same place.
- However, Moses was so reluctant to be sent to Egypt that God gave him a sign by which he would know God had sent him. This is it!

Exodus 3:12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." NIV

3 And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:

- It's interesting that God would call the Israelites; "the house of Jacob." Why wouldn't He say house of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?
- One thought is that God was calling them by the most carnal of the three patriarchs in order to remind them of their true condition.
- This would sort of be in keeping with what God is trying to do here, as He's about to give them His law which further reinforces this.

4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

- God tells Moses to remind the "house of Jacob," how, in Egypt, he had bore them up on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself.
- Both Moses and the Israelites would have certainly understood what God meant when he says He bore them on eagles' wings.
- There is a most fascinating study in the scriptures as it relates to eagles, and this is one of those verses that are very rich with meaning.

The Eagle

1. They build their nests in very high places that are virtually inaccessible (Israel is in a virtually inaccessible place)
2. The eaglet is totally dependent on the mother eagle (The Israelites are totally dependent on the Lord)
3. The eagle is very protective (God is very protective over the children of Israel)
4. The eagle matures very slowly (The Israelites were very slow to mature spiritually)
5. The eagle has to teach the young eaglets to fly (God is going to teach the children of Israel to trust Him)

- When you understand how eagles' teach their young to fly, you understand how the Lord is teaching the Israelites to trust him.
- We can get some fascinating insight into what God is saying here in Exodus, from another passage found in Deuteronomy 32:10-12.

Deuteronomy 32:10-12 10 In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, 11 like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions. 12 The LORD alone led him; no foreign god was with him. NIV

- The way God leads, feeds, directs, and protects His people is likened unto the way that an eagle will train their young to fly.
- The eagle will stir up its nest, hovering over its young, and sometimes even push the eaglet out of the nest where it falls to the ground.
- Before the eaglet hits the ground, the eagle will swoop down, spread its wings and catch it on its pinions, carrying it back to the nest.
- There's another reference to eagles that has profound application to us in our Christian experience, it's found in Isaiah

Isaiah 40:28-31 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. NKJV

- Eagles have a very long life span sometimes living as long as 70 or more years, but only after they are able to renew their strength.
- They have to go to a place by themselves and wait to shed their old feathers and claws so they can grow new ones and become strong.

5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

- Notice that God doesn't say; "if you will indeed obey My law," He says; "if you will obey My voice, and keep My covenant. Big difference!
- The law was not given so that Israel could keep it, that's impossible. It was given to drive Israel to God and His covenant with them.
- Israel could enter and keep God's covenant with them by choosing to obey the requirements of offering sacrifices for their sins.

- God also has Moses tell them that if they keep His covenant, they will be a special treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.
- The bottom line is the same for us. If we'll live a life of obedience in the New Covenant, our lives will be blessed as a treasure to God.

7 So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

- It's interesting that when Moses brings the "Word which the Lord commanded," they all said; "All that the Lord has spoken we will do."
- First, they haven't even heard what the commandments are and they are already saying that they will obey all that God has spoken.
- Second, they not only can't keep the commandments, they won't keep the commandments. Soon, they'll break them with a golden calf.

9 And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

- It seems that God is preparing Moses by reaffirming him. God knows that Israel will not believe Moses. They'll constantly question him.
- For leaders, this is perhaps one of the most encouraging verses in the Bible. God is going to do something for Moses so people believe.
- He will come to Moses and speak to him so that the people may hear when He speaks to him and believe that God does speak to him.

10 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. 11 And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

- Notice how the people were to be consecrated and washed so they're ready to hear the Lord when He came down upon Mount Sinai.
- There is a prerequisite to hearing God speak; we must be prepared by being consecrated for the Lord, and pure before the Lord.
- It's also interesting to note how that it's the third day before the Lord would come down in the sight of the people, and not before.

12 You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13 Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

- At first, this seems harsh. Why would God have boundaries so the people couldn't go up to the mountain, lest they're put to death?
- One thought is that it's because man cannot come to a Holy God in his sinful condition. For them to do this would be likened to that.
- Meeting with God could only come after the trumpet on the third day. Trying before this would be coming before God opened the way.

14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives."

- After doing what God had commanded him to do, Moses then tells them to get ready for the third day by not coming near their wives.
- This seems to indicate that they were not to have anything that could distract them before this meeting with God on the third day.

16 Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.

- Notice that this takes place on the morning of the third day. Clearly, this points to resurrection morning taking place on the third day.
- Also, it says the trumpet was very loud; it probably had to be so it could be over the thunder and earthquake. No wonder they trembled.
- One has suggested that this points to the Day of Pentecost because in the shaking and quaking the Lord would descend upon it in fire.

20 Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

- This also seems to point to the rapture; after the trumpet sound the Lord will come down for His church like He does here for Moses.
- Also, notice that "the Lord calls Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up." So too will we go up at the trumpet of God.

- There's an interesting thought I want to look at before we move on to verse 21. One has suggested that there's a triune picture here.
- God the Father comes down; brings His Word, God the Spirit comes down; empowers His people, God the Son comes down; takes us home.

21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. 22 Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them." 23 But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.'" 24 Then the LORD said to him, "Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them." 25 So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

- It seems that there were many who, for some reason, tried to follow Moses and Aaron up to Mount Sinai, risking their very lives.
- It was serious enough that Moses had to turn around and go back to warn them not to break through the boundary and follow them up.
- One thought is that the presence of God would have been so powerful, that it would have killed them. God was actually protecting them.

- This brings up a good question: "what would cause them to go up, even after being warned that to do so could cost them their lives?"
- It's been suggested it was because of their rebellion, or at best their curiosity, however, I think the reason was because of their pride.
- This can serve as an extremely valuable lesson for those of us who, because of pride, exalt ourselves against the will of the Lord.

- I want to end chapter 19 by looking at a reference in Hebrews that has profound application to us as believers in the New Covenant.

Hebrews 12:18-24 18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; 19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, 20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." 21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." 22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. NIV

- The writer of Hebrews compares Mount Sinai with Mount Zion by drawing some interesting parallels between them then; and us now.

Mount Sinai	Mount Zion
They came to this mountain	We come to a different mountain
Was the Old Covenant	Is the New Covenant
God's Law	God's Grace
Condemnation	Salvation
There was fear and terror	There is love and forgiveness
Was in a dry and desolate desert	Is in the city of the Living God
Was earthly	Is heavenly
Only Moses could come and meet God	An innumerable company comes as a general assembly
There were guilty men in fear	There are just men made perfect
Moses is the mediator	Jesus is the mediator
Ratified by the blood of animals	Ratified by the blood of God's precious Son, Jesus
Excluded people with barriers	Includes people because the barrier has been torn
Meant death	Means life